

THE ULTIMATE SYNONYM GROUP

DMITRI A. BORGMANN
Dayton, Washington

What is the most talked-about subject in the English-speaking world today? Baldness! How do I know? Because there are more synonyms for the word **baldness** than for any other English word or term.

I refer, of course, to synonyms in essentially standard English, with only a nominal admixture of the mildest colloquial English. If we look at concepts such as **drunk**, **stupid**, **crazy** and **prostitute**, we find hundreds of synonyms for each one; for example, in his book Words (New York: Delacorte Press, 1982), Paul Dickson lists 2231 synonyms for **drunk**. However, most of these synonyms are in the category of thoroughly colloquial, slang, or even obscene words and expressions. Compiling lists of such synonyms is an activity that does not belong in the rarefied atmosphere of true logology.

My discovery of the concept of baldness as the synonym kingpin in the realm of genuine logology is the result of my search for the largest single synonym group in standard English. No other concept can be clothed in as many different ways as can that of the absence of hair on one's head. This article presents my synonym list, 145 members strong. The source on which each term is based is given in coded form, to conserve space. The completed list of references follows the text of the article.

The list is intended to be one of genuine synonyms. Works such as Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms (Springfield, Massachusetts, 1968) compare and contrast the meanings of words sharing some important semantic element but differing substantially in other respects. Such word groups are not true synonym sets. Genuine synonyms are terms identical or virtually identical in meaning. For example, there is a tropical American mammal known equally well as the COATI, NASUA, PISOTE, or TEJON. These four words are true synonyms, usable interchangeably. It is synonym groups such as this one that I sought, except on a much larger scale.

I feel certain that no other synonym group within standard English begins to approach the magnitude of the **baldness** group. On the other hand, I am equally certain that the subjoined list is incomplete. I am particularly concerned about the relative paucity of medical terms included in the list - there must be many more to which I have no access, short of scanning a series of medical dictionaries page by page - a most tedious exercise which simply isn't my style. I shall, therefore, welcome substantial additions to the following list, contributed by readers with medical expertise

greater than mine.

Even if you are unable to add to the list, you can now wax eloquent on the subject of baldness as never before. Using only one new term from the list each day, it will take you almost five months to make your first circuit of the list - the first of many, of course!

ABSENCE OF HAIR Baldness (F, see baldness).

ABSENCE OF HEAD HAIR Baldness (O, see baldness).

ACOMIA Baldness (W2).

ACOMOUSNESS The state of being acomous or bald (W2, see acomous). The suffix -ness may be added to any adjective or participle, irrespective of its form or origin (O).

ALOPECIA Baldness (O). The term most frequently used in medical literature. Do not confuse it with alopeke, an ancient Greek helmetlike cap made of foxskin (W2).

ALOPECIA CAPITIS TOTALIS The total loss of head hair (STE). Loss is the privation ensuing from a loss (W2). The qualifier total is understood in the ordinary use of the word baldness.

ALOPECIA MALIGNA Equated with alopecia totalis, which see below (STE). The qualifier complete is understood in the ordinary use of the word baldness.

ALOPECIA TOTALIS Complete loss of head hair (DOR).

ALOPECIA UNIVERSALIS Equated with alopecia totalis, which see above (STE).

ALOPECICALITY; ALOPECICALNESS; ALOPECICITY The state of being alopecic or bald (DOR, see alopecic). The three terms are, respectively, modeled after tragic-tragicity, tragic-tragicalness, and concentric-concentricity. The suffix -ity is a common termination of nouns of Latin origin or formed after Latin analogy, from adjectives usually but not always of Latin origin or type (C).

ALOPECY Alopecia or baldness (O).

ANAPHALANTIASIS Baldness (F). The dictionary's qualification "especially of the front part of the head" indicates that, at least occasionally, the term refers to general baldness. It has no connection with elephantiasis.

ANAPHALANTIS Anaphalantiasis or baldness (F).

ATRICHIA Alopecia or baldness (W3).

ATRICHIASIS Absence of hair, which equates it with atrichia, above (GOU).

ATRICHICALITY; ATRICHICALNESS; ATRICHICITY The state of being atrichic or hairless (W3, see atrichic; O, see hairless). The three terms are, respectively, modeled after tragic-tragicity, tragic-tragicalness, and concentric-concentricity.

- ATRICHOSIS Atrichia or baldness (W3, see atrichia and atrichosis).
- BALD-AS-A-BILLIARD-BALLNESS; BALD-AS-A-COOTNESS; BALD-AS-AN-EGGNESS Complete baldness (ROG, page 137, column 2).
- BALDENING COMPLETED Baldness (W2, see the verb balden, of which this is the gerund).
- BALDHEADEDNESS Baldness (WOR). See also the definition of bald-headed (W3).
- BALDINGNESS COMPLETED Baldness (W3, see balding).
- BALDISHNESS IN THE EXTREME Baldness (W3, see baldish).
- BALDNESS The most common lay term for the absence of head hair (MWD).
- BALDPATEDNESS Baldness (WOR). See also the definition of bald-pated (W3).
- BALLEDNESS Baldness (O, see both baldness and balled).
- BAREHEADEDNESS The state of having one's head uncovered (W2). Since hair is the natural head covering (R, see hair), bareheadedness can be construed as baldness.
- BARENESS Bareheadedness, which see above (W3, see bare).
- CALLOWNESS Baldness (W2, see callow and callowness).
- CALVEZ; CALVICIE Spanish terms for baldness (R, page 1769; VEL, Part 1, page 112; VEL, Part 2, page 50). The growing Hispanic element in American society requires recognition of both terms in English contexts. The words are cognate with the English words callow ("bald") and calvities ("baldness").
- CALVITIE A French term for baldness (R, page 1720; LAR, Part 1, page 102; LAR, Part 2, page 49). The frequent use of French in fashionable society requires recognition of the term in English contexts. The word is cognate with the English words callow and calvities.
- CALVITIES Baldness (W3).
- CALVITIUM Baldness (DOR).
- CALVITY Baldness (W2).
- CALVOUSNESS The state of being calvous or bald (W2, see calvous).
- CAPILLURGY, COMPLETE Baldness (STE, page 699, column 1). Capillurgy is the removal of hair. See below depilation, complete.
- CHAUVETÉ A French term for baldness, related to the French adjective chauve ("bald"). See comments under calvitie. I do not remember in what reference work I found chauveté. Please help, readers!
- CREW CUT, THE ULTIMATE Baldness (MWD, see crew cut). A crew cut is a very short haircut, which see below.
- DECALVANCE COMPLETED Baldness (STE, see decalvant). Decalvant

means "making bald"; the noun suffix *-ance* is a living formative (O) and is of Latin origin, forming nouns from adjectives ending in *-ant* (C).

DECALVATION, THE END RESULT OF Baldness (W2). Decalvation is the extraction of hair so as to make an individual bald.

DEFLUCTION IN THE EXTREME Baldness (O, see defluxion). Defluction is a falling off of hair.

DEFLUVIUM Alopecia or baldness (W2).

DEFLUVIUM CAPILLORUM Alopecia or baldness (BLA).

DEFLUXIO CAPILLORUM Alopecia or baldness (GOU, see alopecia).

DEFLUXIO IN THE EXTREME Baldness (STE). Defluxio is a sudden loss of hair.

DEFLUXION IN THE EXTREME Baldness (O). Defluxion is a falling off of hair.

DEGLABRATION COMPLETED Baldness (GOU). Deglabration is the process of becoming bald.

DEHAİREDNESS The state of being deprived of hair, or of being depilated (W2, see the verb dehaired, and participle dehaired).

DENUATION In medicine, the condition of a part stripped of its natural covering (F). Since hair is the natural covering of the head, the term is equivalent to baldness.

DEPILATEDNESS The state of having had one's hair removed; baldness (W3, see the verb depilate, and participle depilated).

DEPILATION, COMPLETE Baldness (STE). Depilation is the removal of hair. Removal is the fact of being removed (W2).

DEPILOUSNESS The state of being depilous or hairless (W3, see depilous).

DESTITUTENESS OF HAİR Baldness (W2, see bald).

DESTITUTION OF HAİR Baldness (W2, see bald). Destitution is the state of lacking something (W3).

DODDIENESS Baldness (F, see the Scottish word doddie, under doddy). This is modeled after yeukie-yeukieness, a Scottish term for the condition of itching (W2).

DODDINESS Baldness (F, see the Scottish word doddy).

DROPACISM, COMPLETE Baldness (STE). Dropacism is the removal of hairs by means of wax or a plaster.

ELECTROLYSIS, COMPLETE Baldness (FAM, page 929). Electrolysis is the permanent removal of hair by means of an electric needle.

EPILATEDNESS The state of having had one's hair removed or eradicated: baldness (W2, see the verb epilate, and participle epilated).

EPILATION, COMPLETE Baldness (W3). Epilation is the loss or re-

moval of hair.

EPILOSENESS; EPILOSITY The state of being epilose or bald (W1, see epilose). Epilosity is modeled after verbose-verbosity.

FALLING HAIR, THE END RESULT OF Baldness (ROG, see falling hair, page 137, column 1).

FRAGILITAS CRINIUM, EXTREME Baldness (STE, see fragilitas crinium). Fragilitas crinium is the breaking off of head hair. Something that breaks off becomes detached from that to which it is attached, as a head hair from the scalp (AME).

GLABRATENESS The state of being glabrate or without hair (F, see glabrate).

GLABREITY Baldness (F).

GLABRESCENCE COMPLETED Baldness (F, see glabrescent). Glabrescence is the process of becoming hairless. Adjectives ending in -ent are usually accompanied by derived nouns ending in -ence (C).

GLABRIFICATION COMPLETED Baldness (GOU). Glabrification is the process of becoming hairless or bald.

GLABRITY Baldness (F).

GLABROUSNESS Baldness (W3; STE, see glabrous).

HAIRCUT, THE ULTIMATE Baldness (W3, see haircut). A haircut is the hairstyle achieved by cutting.

HAIRLINE RECEDING TO THE NTH DEGREE, A Baldness (W3, see receding hairline under the entry hairline).

HOLACOMIA Total baldness (REV, page 26, column 2).

HYPOTRICHOSIS The entire absence of hair; hairlessness; baldness (GOU, see hypotrichosis). Hairlessness is equivalent to baldness(O).

LACK, HAIR; LACK OF HAIR; LACK OF HEAD HAIR Lack is the absence of something (R). The lack of hair is, therefore, the absence of hair, equated with baldness (F). Lack of head hair is a more explicit concept (AME, see bald).

LAPSUS CAPILLORUM Alopecia or baldness (GOU, see alopecia). The term is, just possibly, an error for lapsus pilorum, the term appearing as a regular entry in other medical dictionaries, even though it is analogous to defluvium capillorum and to defluxio capillorum, both above.

LIPSOTRICHIA, COMPLETE Lipsotrichia is a falling out of one's hair (REV, page 157, column 2).

LIPSOTRYCHIA, COMPLETE Lipsotrychia is a falling out of one's hair (GOU). Probably a misprint for lipsotrichia, above.

LOSS, HAIR; LOSS OF HAIR; LOSS OF HEAD HAIR Loss is the state of being lost or destroyed (W2). The loss of hair is, therefore, the absence of hair, equated with baldness (F).

- MADAROMA** Derived from the Greek word *madaros* ("bald"), the term is a synonym for *madarosis*, which see below (GOU).
- MADAROSIS** Derived from the Greek word *madaros* ("bald"), the term means loss of hair, which see above (O). The dictionary's qualification "especially of that of the eyebrows" indicates that the term sometimes refers to baldness of the head.
- MORBUS VULPIS** Alopecia or baldness (BLA).
- OLIGOTRICHIA, ULTIMATE** Baldness (BLA, see *oligotrichia*). *Oligotrichia* is scantiness or thinness of hair.
- OLIGOTRICHOSIS, ULTIMATE** Baldness (DOR, see *oligotrichosis*). *Oligotrichosis* is a synonym for *oligotrichia*, which see above.
- PEELEDNESS** The state of being peeled or bald (W2, see peeled and tonsured). Peeled means tonsured, which means bald.
- PELADOPHOBIA REALIZED** *Peladophobia* is a morbid fear of baldness (DOR). Actual baldness is what makes that fear real, converting it from imagination to actuality.
- PELONA; PELONIA** Spanish terms for baldness (VEL, Part 1, page 488). See comment under *calvez*, above. The inclusion of these terms here is dictated further by the fact that they are the nouns corresponding to the English adjective *pelon* ("hairless"), transplanted into English from Spanish (W2).
- PHALACROCLINIA EXEMPLIFIED** *Phalacroclinia* is the tendency to baldness seen in some families (REV, page 26, column 2).
- PHALACROSIS** Baldness (W3).
- PHALACROTICALITY; PHALACROTICALNESS; PHALACROTICITY; PHALACROUSNESS** The state of being phalacrotic, phalacrous, or bald (GOU, see *phalacrotic* and *phalacrous*). The first and third nouns are, respectively, modeled after tragic-tragicality and concentric-concentricity.
- PEELGARLICKINESS; PILGARLICKINESS; PILLED-GARLICKINESS** The state of being like a bald head or like a baldheaded man - that is, of being pilgarlicky or, by analogy, peelgarlicky or pilled-garlicky (W2, see *peelgarlic*, *pilgarlic*, and *pilgarlicky*; W1, see *pilled-garlic*).
- PILLEDNESS** The state of being pilled or bald: baldness (W2).
- PILLPATEDNESS** The state of being like a pillpate or shaven (bald) head (C, see *pillpate*).
- POLLEDNESS** The state of being polled or shaved (W2, see *polled*). See *shavedness*, below.
- PSILOSIS** Alopecia or baldness (F). Do not confuse the term with its antonym *pilosis*, the excessive growth of hair (DOR).
- PSILOTICALITY; PSILOTICALNESS; PSILOTICITY** The state of being psilotic or bald (F, see *psilotic*). The three terms are, respectively, modeled after tragic-tragicality, tragic-tragicalness, and concentric-concentricity.

SHAVEDNESS; SHAVENNESS The state of having had the hair severed from one's head: baldness (W3, see shaved and shaven).

SHORNNES The state of having had one's hair cut off: baldness (W3, see the verb shear, of which shorn is the participle).

SMOOTHNESS The state of being without hair, or smooth (W3). See hairlessness for the equation of the latter with baldness.

THINNESS ON TOP, ULTIMATE Baldness (ROG, see thin on top, page 137, column 2).

TONSURE The state of being shorn of head hair: baldness (W2).

TONSUREDNESS The state of being tonsured or bald (W2, see tonsured).

TONSURING COMPLETED Baldness: the shaving of the head completed (W2, see the verb tonsure, of which this is the gerund).

TRICHOCLASMANIA, THE END RESULT OF Baldness (BLA, see trichoclasmania). Trichoclasmania is an abnormal desire to break off scalp hair. See comments under fragilitas crinium, extreme.

TRICHOKRYPTOMANIA Synonym for trichorrhexomania, which see below (DOR). The infix *-krypto-* is derived from the Greek *kryptos* ("secret, hidden").

TRICHOKYPTOMANIA Synonym for trichorrhexomania, which see below (GOU). The infix *-kypto-* is derived from the Greek *kyptos* ("crooked"), which seems incorrect.

TRICHOLOGIA UNCHECKED; TRICHOLOGY UNCHECKED Baldness (BLA). Trichologia (or trichology) is the plucking out of one's hair.

TRICHOMADESIS, TERMINAL Baldness (BLA, see trichomadesis). Trichomadesis is the falling out of hair that precedes alopecia or baldness.

TRICHOMANIA, UNRESTRAINED A synonym for trichotillomania, unrestrained, which see below (BLA).

TRICHOPATHOPHOBIA REALIZED; TRICHOPHOBIA REALIZED Chiefly, baldness (BLA, see trichopathophobia and trichophobia). Both terms designate undue anxiety and fear regarding hair, its growth, and diseases affecting it. The single most common anxiety regarding hair is the dread of baldness. See comment under peladophobia realized, above.

TRICHORREXIS, EXTREME Baldness (F, see trichorrexsis). Trichorrexsis is an obvious typographical error for trichorrhexis.

TRICHORRHEA, TERMINAL Baldness (W2, see trichorrhoea). Trichorrhoea is rapidly developing alopecia or baldness.

TRICHORRHEXIS, EXTREME Baldness (DOR, see trichorrhexis). Trichorrhexis is the breaking off of one's hair. See comments under fragilitas crinium, extreme, above.

TRICHORRHEXOMANIA UNCHECKED Baldness (DOR, see trichorrhexomania). Trichorrhexomania is a morbid tendency to break one's

hairs off by pinching them with one's fingernails. See comments under fragilitas crinium, extreme, above.

TRICHORRHOEA, TERMINAL See trichorrhea, terminal, above (W2).

TRICHOSCHISIS, EXTREME A synonym for trichorrhexis, extreme, above (STE).

TRICHOSIS ATHRIX Alopecia or baldness (GOU).

TRICHOSTERETICITY Baldness viewed as hair deprivation (GOU, see trichostereticus). The word is derived from the adjective trichostereticus ("causing loss of hair"), on the model of lubricous-lubricity(W2). Note that lubricous is derived from the Latin lubricus. The Greek word steretikos from which the term is partially derived means "depriving." Deprivation is the state of being deprived.

TRICHOTILLOMANIA, UNRESTRAINED Baldness (BLA, see trichotillomania). Trichotillomania is an uncontrollable impulse to pull out one's hair.

TRICHOTOMY, TERMINAL Baldness (W2, see trichotomist). Trichotomy - a back-formation from trichotomist, "a cutter of hair" - is defined as the cutting of hair. Be careful to distinguish the word from trichotomy, "a dividing into three parts" (W3).

UNHAIRDNESS The state of having been made bald (W3, see the verb unhair, with the participle unhaired).

VULPIS MORBUS Alopecia or baldness (GOU, page 59, column 1). The term appears to be a typographical error for morbus vulpis, the term given in boldface type by various medical dictionaries, including this one.

WITHOUT-HAIRNESS The state of being without hair, hairless, or bald (FWC, see bald; R, see hairless).

My search for terms describing the absence of head hair has ended on a sad note. First, I had striven for 154 (= 22x7) terms, but found only 145. Second, only 17 of the 26 letters of the alphabet appear as initial letters in my list of terms, with the list ending three steps short of the end of the alphabet. Third, five of the dictionary terms located - lapsus capillorum, lipsotrychia, trichokryptomania, trichorrexis, and vulpis morbus - are under varying degrees of suspicion: they are anywhere from possibly to certainly dictionary errors.

In addition, some readers are going to accuse me of a ruthless manipulation of dictionaries to produce the foregoing list. Let them remember that iron-willed determination is needed to achieve spectacular results.

REFERENCES

Fifteen of the twenty references cited in this article are extremely well-known. These are identified in abbreviated form. The remaining five references are less well-known and are, therefore, identified fully.

- AME The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, New College Edition, 1980
- BLA Blakiston's New Gould Medical Dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1956
- C The Century Dictionary, 6 volumes, 1889-1891
- DOR Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, 24th Edition, 1965
- F Funk & Wagnalls New Standard, unabridged, 1963 Edition
- FAM Cooley, Donald G., ed., Better Homes and Gardens Family Medical Guide, rev. ed. New York: Better Homes and Gardens Books, 1973
- FWC Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, 1973
- GOU Gould's Medical Dictionary, 5th rev. ed., 1941
- LAR Dubois, Marguerite-Marie, ed., Larousse Modern French-English English-French Dictionary, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960
- MWD The Merriam-Webster [Pocket] Dictionary, August 1974
- O The Oxford English Dictionary, 13 volumes, 1933
- R The Random House Dictionary, unabridged, 1966 Edition
- REV Schmidt, Jakob E., Reversicon: A Medical Word Finder, Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, publisher, 1958
- ROG Dutch, Robert A., ed., The Original Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, new ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1965
- STE Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 21st Edition, 1966
- VEL Velázquez de la Cadena, Mariano, ed.-in-chief, A New Pronouncing Dictionary of the Spanish and English Languages, Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Company, 1942
- W1 Merriam-Webster unabridged dictionary, 1st Edition, 1918
- W2 Merriam-Webster unabridged dictionary, 2nd Edition, 1953
- W3 Merriam-Webster unabridged dictionary, 3rd Edition, 1966
- WOR The World Book Dictionary, 2 volumes, 1968 Edition